

Message Text

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71-62

ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 OES-03 FEA-01 ERDA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7543

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AMCONSUL SYDNEY

AMCONSUL BRISBANE UNN

AMCONSUL PERTH UNN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN EMIN ENRG JA FR AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN POLICY ON SALE OF URANIUM TO NPT NON-SIGNATORIES

1. SUMMARY. STATEMENTS MADE BY NATIONAL RESOURCES AND OVERSEAS TRADE MINISTER, DOUG ANTHONY, AT HIS FEB. 3 PRESS CONFERENCE LEFT SOME CONFUSION AS TO THE EXACT NATURE OF AUSTRALIA'S URANIUM EXPORT POLICY. THE QUESTION REMAINING AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS WHETHER OR NOT AUSTRALIAN URANIUM WOULD BE SOLD TO NON-SIGNATORIES OF THE NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT). DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEPT. OF NATIONAL RESOURCES OFFICIALS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT, THE FACT THAT A COUNTRY WAS NOT A SIGNATORY OF

THE NPT DID NOT PRECLUDE THAT COUNTRY FROM PURCHASING
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AUSTRALIAN URANIUM. END SUMMARY.

2. ANTHONY'S REPLIES TO PRESS QUESTIONS RELATING TO GOA URANIUM SALES TO NON-SIGNATORIES OF THE NPT DID NOT MAKE CLEAR EXACTLY WHICH SAFEGUARD FACTORS WOULD BE CONSIDERED IN MARKETING AUSTRALIAN URANIUM; THAT IS, WHICH CONDITIONS COUNTRIES MUST MEET TO BE CONSIDERED AS POSSIBLE URANIUM PURCHASERS.

3. ANTHONY'S CONFUSION AS TO THE EXACT GOA URANIUM SALES POLICY IS REVEALED IN THE FOLLOWING REPLIES TO PRESS QUESTIONS:

A) WHEN ANTHONY WAS ASKED IF FRANCE, A NON-SIGNATORY OF THE NPT, COULD PURCHASE URANIUM, ANTHONY SAID THAT URANIUM SALES QTE ... WILL BE TO MEMBERS WHO ARE SIGNATORIES TO THE TREATY. END QTE.

B) ANTHONY WAS THEN ASKED IF HIS REPLY (PARA 3A ABOVE) WAS CORRECT AND FRANCE HAD TO SIGN THE NPT TO GET AUSTRALIAN URANIUM. ANTHONY SAID QTE WELL, I WAS LED TO BELIEVE IT WAS THE STATED POLICY, BUT IT WAS NOT BEING IMPLEMENTED AS HARD AS THAT. END QTE. ANTHONY'S REFERENCE TO QTE: BEING IMPLEMENTED AS HARD AS THAT END QTE REFERRED TO THE DECISION OF THE LABOR GOVERNMENT THAT SALES TO THE FRENCH WOULD RECEIVE CONSIDERATION IN A FRAMEWORK BROADER THAN GUIDELINES SPECIFIED IN THE NPT;

C) WHEN ANTHONY WAS ASKED AGAIN WHETHER OR NOT FRANCE HAD TO SIGN THE NPT TO BE ABLE TO PURCHASE AUSTRALIAN URANIUM, ANTHONY REPLIED QTE: WELL, I DO NOT THINK WE HAVE WORDS I HAVE USED--THAT THEY WOULD NEED TO BE A SIGNATORY TO THE NPT. END QTE.

4. ON FEB. 5, EMBOFFS VISITED DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY CORKERY TO DISCUSS OTHER MATTERS. CORKERY VOLUNTEERED THAT ANTHONY HAD ERRED (PARA 3 ABOVE) AND THAT URANIUM COULD BE SOLD TO NON-SIGNATORIES OF THE NPT.

5. LATER EMBOFF DISCUSSIONS WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY R. P. MAXWELL OF THE URANIUM BRANCH OF THE DEPT. OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NATIONAL RESOURCES AND HIS STAFF SUPPORTED CORKERY'S CONTENTION THAT ANTHONY HAD ERRED.

6. EMBOFF WAS INFORMED BY MAXWELL THAT CURRENT GOA POLICY CONCERNING URANIUM SALES WAS STATED IN THE LIBERAL/NCP MINERALS AND ENERGY STATEMENT OF NOV. 25, 1975. QTE: URANIUM EXPORTS WILL BE PERMITTED SO AS TO ENSURE THAT SAFEGUARD PROCEDURES APPLY CONSISTENT WITH

AUSTRALIA'S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE TREATY ON THE
NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. END QTE.
FURTHER, MAXWELL NOTED THAT THE CURRENT POLICY WAS
THE SAME AS THAT OF THE PREVIOUS LABOR GOVERNMENT.

7. WHEN QUERIED FURTHER, MAXWELL STATED THAT URANIUM
SALES WERE NOT PRECLUDED TO NON-SIGNATORIES OF THE
NPT. EACH SALE WOULD BE VIEWED ON ITS OWN MERITS
AND THE GOA WOULD BE VERY CONSCIOUS OF ITS INTER-
NATIONAL SAFEGUARD RESPONSIBILITIES (PARA 6) IN
DECIDING WHICH SALES TO PERMIT.

8. COMMENT: ANTHONY'S PRESS CONFERENCE DID AROUSE
CONFUSION OVER THE EXACT NATURE OF THE GOA'S URANIUM
EXPORT POLICY. ANTHONY'S REPLIES DO NOT
INDICATE ANY DISARRAY WITHIN THE GOA CONCERNING
URANIUM POLICY. THE PLAIN FACT IS THAT ANTHONY ERRED
AND URANIUM SALES WILL BE PERMITTED PER PARA 6. HARGROVE

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